

DIANE'S STORY
AS PRODUCED MP3

My name is Diane. I'm an African American female. I'm 51 years old. When I was 24 I became physically challenged with three young children. (My baby was nine months old.) My mobility is with the use of a wheelchair and a walker for short distance. Becoming physically challenged wasn't enough for me. I guess I needed another wake up call to really live life.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was 40. It doesn't run in my family. So I was very surprised. Breast cancer is definitely not a death sentence. It's a wake up call.

It makes you aware of just how fragile life can be and you also become aware of the things that you have to do in order to survive. You have to be your own advocate. This is your health. This is your life. Demand everything that you need, because you can't take shortcuts with breast cancer.

Early detection is the key. It's the key to whether you're going to live or die. And you can't detect it if you don't go for the screenings.

You may not have breast cancer. You may be fortunate. You may be one of the blessed ones. But you won't know unless you have the screenings. It can happen to you-I'm proof of that. catching it when I did catch it, that's why I'm alive today. I'm ecstatic to be alive.

My final words to women with any type of physical disability is that you've come this far and it hasn't been easy. You've overcome what you had to overcome, you're still alive and you're still functioning. And that in itself shows you that you have the strength to do what you have to do for yourself. You have to take that strength or dig deep inside and find the strength to really take care of yourself. You know you deserve this. We deserve this. From where I'm sitting breast cancer screening is the key to living.